NAAM IN SIKHISM

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1. Introductory

Every religion has its world-view on which are based its concepts about Reality, the place of man in the universe, ethics and human goals. All students of Sikhism know that the concept of Naam is fundamental to the gospel of Guru Granth Sahib and the entire structure of its theology. In fact, Sikhism has often been called the Naam Maarg or the way of Naam. It is in this context that we shall endeavour to trace the salient features and implications of this concept, which we believe, holds the key to the understanding of the message of the Sikh Gurus, their religious and social ideas and their world-view.

At the outset, we should like to make one point clear about the language and the various traditional terms used by the Sikh Gurus. Since they were conveying their message to the mass of the people, both Hindus and Muslims, with a view to evoking a response in the very depths of their hearts, they have, for obvious reasons, used in their hymns the then current words and symbols from Indian, Persian and Arabic

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languages. And yet, one thing is patent even from a cursory study of the Guru Granth Sahib that the Gurus have, as was essential for the proper understanding of a new gospel, made the meaning of each concept, symbol and term employed by them, unambiguously clear. Many a time the meaning of such words is entirely their own. Accordingly, we have refrained from tracing the meaning of Naam to its traditional usage and background. In fact, such an exercise could be even misleading and wasteful. We shall, therefore, base our arguments and inferences about Naam on the hymns in Guru Granth Sahib and the accepted facts about the lives of the Sikh Gurus.

2. Definition

Let us now try broadly to indicate how Naam has been used in Guru Granth Sahib, where it appears in a majority of hymns. The Sikh Gurus have given the word Naam, a distinct and significant meaning which is far different from that of mere 'Name' or 'psychic factors' as understood in Naam-Roopa in traditional literature. [5. p. 169]. The basic definition of Naam as contained in Sukhmani and other hymns in Guru Granth Sahib is given below :

(i) 'Naam sustains all regions and universes, all thought, knowledge and consciousness, all skies and stars, all forces and substances, all continents and spheres. Naam emancipates those who accept it in their heart. He, on

whom is His Grace, is yoked to Naam, and he reaches the highest state of development.' [1. p. 284].

(ii) 'Naam is the Creator of everything. To be divorced from Naam is death.' [1. p. 603]. 'All is created by Naam.' [1. p. 753]. 'Naam gives form to everything and through Naam comes all Wisdom or Light.' [1. p. 946].

(iii) 'Naam extends to all creation. There is no place or space where Naam is not.' [1. p. 4].

(iv) 'Naam is the 'Nine Treasures' and Nectar (amrita). It permeates the body.' [1. p. 293].

(v) 'Naam, the immaculate, is unfathomable. How can it be known? Naam is within us. How to get to it ? It is Naam that works everywhere and permeates all space. The perfect Guru awakens your heart to the vision of Naam. It is by the Grace of God that one meets such an Enlightener.' [1. p. 1242].

From the above verses it is clear that the Gurus do not use the word Naam in any restrictive sense, of its being a psychic factor or mere consciousness, but refer to it as the Highest Power, creating, informing, supporting and working the entire creation. In short, Naam is the Reality, supporting and directing the created worlds or the entire cosmos. There are numerous verses in Guru Granth Sahib where Naam and God have been described synonymously. Both Naam and God have been mentioned as "the Creator of the Cosmos", "the Sustainer of the Universe",

"Permeating and informing all things, beings, space and interspace", "the Treasure of virtues, values", "the Support of the helpless", "the Giver of peace and bliss", "Eternal", "Perfect", "Unfathomable", "Friend", "Master" and "Emancipator." The highest state of man is mentioned as the one when he lives and works in tune with God or Naam, often called God's Naam. We, therefore, find that God and Naam are real, eternal and unfathomable. The Sikh Gurus have repeatedly emphasized, as is also stated in the very opening verse of Guru Granth Sahib, that God is one, Ek Oamkaar, and no second entity, as in the case of the Sankhya system, is at all postulated. The Guru says, "My Lord is the only One. He is the only One, (understand) brother, He is the only One." [1. p. 350]. This unambiguously leads us to conclude that God and Naam are one and the same, and the latter may be called the immanent or qualitative aspect of God, since God has been described both as unmanifest (nirguna) and the Creator, and Ocean of values.

In view of the above, we should define Naam as the Dynamic Immanence of God or the Reality sustaining and working the manifest world of force and form. It is on the basis of these fundamentals that we should like to trace and understand some important concepts and conclusions, ideas and institutions, trends and traditions in Sikhism and its socio-religious way of life.

3. Naam and Cosmology

The Guru writes, "the self-existent God manifested Himself into Naam. Second came the Creation of the universe. He permeates it and revels in His creation." "God created the world of life, He planted Naam in it and made it the place for righteous activity." [1. p. 463].

Thus, according to the concept of Naam and the hymns quoted earlier in this regard, God created the world and in His immanent aspect, as Naam, is informing and working it. Only one entity, namely, God, is envisaged and the world, in time and space, is His creation, the same being supported and directed by Naam. Let us see if this cosmological view is also supported by other verses in Guru Granth Sahib.

In the very opening verse of Guru Granth Sahib, God is described as the Sole-One, His Naam as Real, Creator-Lord, ... Timeless Person, One that is not born, Self-existent. [1. p. 1]. The Gurus have stated at a number of places that there was a stage when the Transcendent God was by Himself; and it is later that He started His Creative Activity. In Sidh Gosht, in answer to a question as to where was the Transcendent God before the stage of creation, Guru Nanak replied, "To think of the Transcendent Lord in that state is to enter the realm of wonder. Even at that stage of sunn (void), He permeated all that void." [1. p. 940]. The Guru, in effect, means that to matters that are beyond the spacio-temporal world, it would be wrong to apply the spacio-temporal logic, and yet man knows of no other logic or

language. Perforce, He has to be explained, howsoever inadequately or symbolically, only in terms of that language. That is why the Guru has cautioned us against the pitfalls and inadequacy of human logic and language to comprehend the Timeless One. All the same, the Guru has mentioned the state when the Transcendent God was all by Himself and there was no creation. The Gurus say, "When there was no form in sight, how could there be good or bad actions? When God was in the Self-Absorbed state, there could be no enmity or conflict. When God was all by Himself, there could be no attachment or misunderstanding. Himself He starts the creation. He is the Sole-Creator, there is no second One." [1. p. 290]. "For millions of aeons, the Timeless One was by Himself. There was no substance or space, no day or night (i.e., no time,) no stars or galaxies; God was in His Trance." [1. p. 1035]. "God was by Himself and there was nothing else ..... There was no love or devotion, nor was His Creative Power in operation ..... When He willed, He created the Universe." [1. p. 1036]. The same idea is expressed in these words, "When He willed, the creation appeared." [1. p. 18]. Again, in answer to the question of the Yogis, "When there was no sign and no form, where was the Word (Logos) and how was He identified with Truth?" [1. p. 945]. The Guru replied, "When there was no form, no sign, no individuation, the Word in its essence abided in the Transcendent God; when there was no earth, no sky, (time or space), the Lord permeated everything. All distinctions, all forms then abided in the Wondrous Word.

No one is pure without Truth. Ineffable is this gospel." [1. pp. 945-6].

In short, the Gurus say that before He created form, He was Formless; before He was Immanent, He was Transcendent only : and yet, all immanence, expression, creativity were inherent in Him, and so was His Word, in essence.

In the Jap(u), where a picture of the realm of creativity is given, the Guru writes, "In the region of Truth is God, where He perpetually creates and watches the universe with His benevolent eye, deliberating and directing according to as He Wills." Further, it is stated, "In the region of Creativity (Karam), only God's Power or Force is at work." [1. p. 8]. Again, "Of the region of construction or effort, the medium of expression is form. Here most fantastic forms are fashioned, including consciousness, perception, mind and intellect." Further still, "Innumerable creations are fashioned, myriads are the forms, myriads are the moons, suns, regions." [1. pp. 7-8]. These hymns also indicate how the process of creativity or a becoming world started, and is being sustained and directed by Benevolent God.

In all the above quotations from Guru Granth Sahib, the same idea is expressed, namely, that God is the Sole Entity, Who in His Creative Urge, has produced the Cosmos, which He, in His immanent aspect, Naam, is sustaining vigilantly and directing benevolently according to His Will. In the created world no other entity, like Prakriti in Sankhya and other dualistic systems, is assumed. While the world is real

and is directed by Immanent God, at no stage is the separate independent existence of matter accepted directly or by implication.

4. Metaphysical Implication of Naam

We have seen that according to the concept of Naam and the hymns already quoted in this regard, God created Himself and Naam, and at the second place was created the universe. Further, this universe is being sustained and directed by God as Naam or His Immanent Aspect. This concept of God being the Sole Entity and being the Creator God (karta purakh) is so fundamental in the Sikh theology, that it is mentioned in the very opening line (Mool Mantra) of Guru Granth Sahib and in the beginning of almost every section and sub-section of it. Both the doctrine of Naam and Mool Mantra clearly point out the theology of Sikhism being monotheistic. Let us, therefore, try to see whether this conclusion of ours is correct and whether many of those hurriedly-begotten views about Sikhism being pantheistic, Vedantic, Sankhyic, Yogic or Buddhistic have any validity. A few of the reasons supporting our conclusion are as under :

(i) Throughout the hymns of Guru Granth Sahib, nothing is more significant than the acceptance of the Creator-creature relation between God and man. Invariably, God has been addressed as 'Thou', 'Mother', 'Father', 'Brother', 'Beloved', 'Lord', or 'Husband.' In fact, a majority of the hymns in Guru Granth Sahib are in the form of prayers addressed to God. In the Sikh tradition, two things are

firmly established, having the sanction of the Gurus. First, every ceremony, religious or social, ends with an Ardas or supplication to God, invoking His Grace. Secondly, at the time of initiation ceremony (amrit), a Sikh is enjoined upon to recite or hear daily Jap(u), Jaap(u), ten Sawayaas, Sodar(u), Rahiras and Sohila, besides reading or hearing of Guru Granth Sahib (Sikh Rahit Maryada, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar, 1970, p. 35). We thus see that both in the hymns of Guru Granth Sahib, and the Sikh tradition and practice, this Creator-creature relation is never forgotten. So much so that the Guru calls himself as "the lowliest of the low," [1. p. 15] and never does he mention another person as 'That is Thou.' According to tradition, the Fifth Guru declined to include in Guru Granth Sahib a hymn by a contemporary saint, Bhagat Kaanhaa, saying, "I am He, O, I am the same," because this hymn was felt by the Guru to be evidently contrary to the Sikh thesis that man is not and can never be God, though he can be His instrument.

(ii) The arguments advanced to show the Creator-creature relation in Sikhism and the importance of prayer, mutatis mutandis, apply also to God having a Personality. We need hardly state that this idea of Personality in Theism is not analogous to the idea of limited personality in man, who is a finite being. In the very opening line of Guru Granth Sahib, God is mentioned as the Creator Person, the Timeless Person (karta purakh, akaal moorat). In fact, in all

devotional and mystic religions, the idea of Personality of God is inherent, since devotion involves God and a devotee.

In Sikhism, the idea of Will (hukam, razaa) of God in relation to the created world is as fundamental as in other theistic religions like Christianity and Islam. In fact, both the words hukam and razaa used in Guru Granth Sahib are Arabic in origin. The idea of Will is inalienably linked with the idea of Personality of God, the Creator, Who alone can have a Will. In reality, we know that Will and Naam are virtually synonymous, both being the Immanence of God. While this point will be elaborated later on, it is well-known that in Sikhism the highest ideal for man is to 'carry out the Will of God' [1. p. 1] or to link oneself with Naam.

Another fundamental characteristic of Sikhism showing the Personality of God is His Grace. One of the chief points made out in Guru Granth Sahib is that nothing happens without God's Grace. While it is stated in the hymn of dharam khand, which lays down man's duties in life, that man's assessment will be entirely according to his deeds, it is clearly mentioned that 'final approval will be only by God's Grace.' [1. p. 7]. The idea of Personality, Will and Grace of God being basic to Sikhism, too, underlines its theistic character.

(iii) The verses quoted earlier mention nature as the Creation of God, and not His Emanation or Extension. Obviously, nature is a changing or becoming world, limited by space and time, and cannot be eternal like God, who is

beyond time (akaal moorat). Whereas God is Self-Existent or Self-created (swai bhang), nature is the creation of God. While everything in nature is changing, i.e., is born and dies, God is never born (ajooni). This is the reason why in Sikhism the doctrine of incarnation (avatarhood) or God taking the human form is strictly denied, and is considered heretical; so much so that Guru Gobind Singh described any person holding such an idea as accursed, he being only a servant of God. [2.]. This is also in line with the hymns in the Jap(u) quoted earlier. Here, the world is up to the Region of Creativity (karam khand) initiated through the medium of energy or power (jor). As indicated in the hymns of saram khand and gyaan khand, a fantastic multiplicity of forms, shapes and things, including the moulding of consciousness, sense perceptions, mind, intellect, etc., are described. Everyone knows that in Sikh theology, the highest form of being is the mystic (bhagat). In Japji, the Guru distinctly mentions, or rather limits the presence of these God-conscious or God-filled beings (jin main Raam rahiaa bharpoor) only up to the Region of Creativity, but never beyond it, i.e., not in the Region of Truth or God (sach khand vase Nirankaar). The Universe is the creation of God but not identical with God, which is the basic distinction between monotheism and Indian monism or pantheism.

(iv) At a number of places in Guru Granth Sahib have the Gurus described symbolically the state of God when the creation was not there. All this indicates that God is Transcendent as well, and that He is not co-terminus or

identical with His creation. Not only does the creation not exhaust God, but He is both prior to and Transcendent to His creation. And God's transcendence could be envisaged only under a monotheistic system and never in pantheism.

(v) An argument has been raised in favour of the supposed pantheistic character of Sikhism because of the Gurus', frequent mention of the immanent character of God in the created world. The Gurus have clearly emphasized the transcendental character of God by saying that the world was created in time and space, and the Transcendent God had been there while the world was uncreated, and, for that matter, God's immanent character was unexpressed. We refer to the hymn quoted earlier in this regard. It is also stated that the Word was in God when there was no universe or form. The expression of Naam was prior to the creation of the universe, i.e., 'God manifested into Naam, and at the second place the world was created.' As stated already, Naam is mentioned as the Creator and Director of the world. It is true that the Guru quite often mentions God as informing the universe. But in no scripture has the distinction between the Transcendent and the Immanent aspects of God been made more clear than in Guru Granth Sahib, because God's Immanence has been given separate names, i.e., of Naam, Will and Word. Evidently, all immanence can be expressed only in relation to the realm of creation; i.e., when God's immanence as Naam creates, sustains and moves the world of name and form; when God's immanence as His Will controls and directs the

becoming world; when His immanence as His Word informs and supports the created universe. In other words, in Guru Granth Sahib both the transcendent and the immanent aspects of God are clearly specified and distinguished so as to avoid any confusion or hasty conclusion that Sikhism is pantheistic. We have already seen that in Sikhism the immanence of God in relation to the becoming world does not exhaust God and that is why God's immanent aspect has almost invariably been called His Naam, His Will, His Word. True, at a number of places, the Guru describes God as informing the river, the fish, the boat, and everything. Perhaps, it is such verses as these that have led some to the superficial conclusion of Sikhism being pantheistic. But, all these verses are only a symbolic or another way of expressing the immanence of God. In modern monotheistic theologies, including Christian and Islamic, God's Transcendence and His Immanence in the created world are accepted. Even in Islam, God's Immanence is referred to as, "Is He not closer (to you) than the vein of the neck." [6.]. Such verses as these do not at all indicate anything beyond the immanence of God, or anything contrary to the doctrine of Naam. Obviously, God's immanence (His Naam and Will) is manifested and exercised only in relation to the created and becoming world. This description of His immanence and its operation, metaphoric as it is, can mislead no one to any erroneous inference, especially because the Gurus have clearly stated that the immanent God in the universe does not exhaust God, and He is transcendent too. "He that

permeates all hearts (i.e., Immanent) is Unmanifest too." [1. p. 939]. "He is pervading every where (Immanent) and yet He is beyond everything, beyond pleasure and pain (Transcendent)." [1. p. 784]. "He informs everything and yet is separate too." [1. p. 294]. "Having created the world, He stands in the midst of it and yet is separate from it" [1. p. 788].

(vi) One of the chief objections to any pantheistic theology in the West is the lack of any ethical content and impact in any such view of the universe. Pantheistic philosophies, whether in the East, as in the case of Upanishads, or in the West, as in the case of Spinoza and Schopenhauer, lead to pessimism and fatalism, and lack of moral effort and responsibility on the part of the individual. The disasterous ethical consequences of pantheistic doctrines, including monism that downgrades the reality of the phenomenal world, are too well-known to be detailed here. In this context, we may like to see what is the ethical content and impact of the doctrine of Naam. In no religious system is the emphasis on ethical conduct greater than in Guru Granth Sahib, where "truthful living or conduct has been declared higher than Truth itself." [1. p. 62]. In Jap(u), the Guru says that man's final assessment and approval before God will depend entirely on his deeds in this world. [1. p. 7]. Further, 'egoistic conduct' has been called 'the opposite of Naam', [1. p. 560] which, as we find, involves selfless and virtuous conduct, Naam being the treasure of all virtues. Similarly, moral living is stressed, since the ideal in life is 'to carry out

the Will of God', God's Will and Naam being virtually synonymous. Judged from the emphasis on virtuous life (the matter will be detailed while dealing with the subject of goal, ethics, etc.) and moral responsibility in Sikhism and its anti-deterministic view, we should evidently conclude that Sikhism is monotheistic and not pantheistic.

(vii) There is a philosophic controversy whether or not mysticism of all kinds is monotheistic or pantheistic. Sikhism is undeniably based on a mystical experience. But so are religions like Christianity and Islam which are fanatically monotheistic. It is well-known that many of the great Christian and Muslim mystics have been dubbed as heretical, because their description of their mystical experiences could be misconstrued to support a pantheistic view of God, even though these mystics were devotedly religious and deeply reverential to their respective Prophets. Hence, the controversy hardly affects our argument.

True, some symbolic descriptions in Guru Granth Sahib, which, when seen out of their context, and not seen against the overall background of Sikh theology and the overwhelming scriptural evidence to the contrary, could be misconstrued to suggest pantheistic inferences. But, such a view would obviously be not only far-fetched, but also opposed to the general thesis of the Gurus, which they themselves actually lived and demonstrated for 240 years, and the concept of Naam. The metaphysical implication of

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the doctrine of Naam clearly gives a monotheistic import to Sikhism, which view we find is unmistakably in accordance with the accepted concepts in Guru Granth Sahib.

5. Naam and the Reality of the World and Interest in Life

The greatest implication of the doctrine is in its proclaiming the dynamic reality and authenticity of the world and life. "God created the world of life and planted Naam therein, making it the place of righteous activity." [1. p. 463]. "God created the world and permeated it with His Light." [1. p. 930]. Since Naam, God's Immanence, has not only created the world, but is also supporting, controlling and directing it, the same cannot be unreal or illusory. In fact, Naam's immanence in this world guarantees its being a place of righteous activity, and not being a fruitless, unwanted or capricious creation. In one form or the other, this idea about the reality of the world gets repeated expression and emphasis in Guru Granth Sahib. "True are Thy worlds, true are Thy universes, true Thy forms Thou createth. True are Thy doings. This world is the Abode of the True One and He resides in it." [1. p. 463]. "True is He, True is His creation." [1. p. 294]. "Human body is the Temple of God." [1. p. 952]. "Beauteous, O Farid, are the garden of earth and the human body." [1. p. 966]. "Deride not the world, it is the creation of God." [1. p. 611].

It naturally follows from this doctrine that the world is real and God is greatly interested in it, since He has created it. He 'revels in His creation' [1. p. 463] and is sustaining and directing it. In Japji, God is described as 'perpetually creating the world and benevolently nurturing His creation.' [1. p. 8]. 'God is the One, Who works through winds, waters and fire.' [1. p. 930]. This emphatic assertion about the authenticity of the world is a clear departure from the Indian religious tradition, and is, for that matter, radical in its implication. The Gurus were extremely conscious of this fundamental change they were making, and that is why, both in their lives and in their hymns, they have been laying great and repeated stress on this aspect of their spiritual thesis, lest they should be misunderstood on this issue. Living in this world is not a bondage (bandhan) for them, but a great privilege and opportunity. Not only is God benevolently directing the world in which He is immanent, but each one of us is 'yoked to His task and each is assigned a duty to perform.' [1. p. 736]. All this clearly indicates God's or Naam's plan and purpose in His creative activity.

This idea is also clear from the Gurus' reference, again and again, to God's Will working in this becoming universe. The very idea of a God of Will clearly presupposes and implies a direction, and a goal in the creative movement. The persistent interest of God in the creative movement is also obvious from the fact that the Guru calls Him 'the Protector' (raakhaa), 'Father' (pita), 'King-emperor' (Padshah) and a 'Just Administrator' (adlee). In Japji also, the Guru

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emphasizes the idea that God adjudges each according to his deeds in this world.

Naam has been described as the 'Treasure of Virtues and Qualities.' As a loving God with social and other attributes, He has been referred to as 'Father and Mother' (maataa, pitaa), 'Brother' (bharaataa), 'Friend' (mittar), 'Helper of the poor' (gareeb nivaaz), 'Shelter of the shelterless' (nithaaviaan daa thaan), 'Help to the Helpless' (nidhariaan di dhar), 'Remover of suffering and pain' (dukh bhanjan), 'Merciful' (raheem), etc. God with attributes leads to three inferences. First, qualities have a meaning only in relation to spacio-temporal world, since all perfection is static and all qualities are relative, capable of expression only in a changing universe. We have already seen that when God was by Himself and the world was not there, the question of good or bad, saved or saviour, love or devotion did not arise. Naam, being the source of all virtues, the world becomes an essential and integral part of the plan of Naam; since without a world for expression there could be no Will and no attributive aspect of God. Thus, Naam and the world are conjoint. Secondly, qualities in Naam indicate clearly — and this is the most important aspect — the direction of the progress and the ideal to be pursued by man in this world. Thirdly, all this ensures a logical and deep interest of Naam in the empirical world, since its attributive expression can be made only in it. That is also exactly the reason why the Gurus call the world real. Consequently, their message and mission also relate to this world, wherein alone these can be

fulfilled. For the same reason, the Sikh Gurus' deep interest in all aspects of life, including socio-political aspects, can be directly traced to Naam, whose devotees they were. No feeling or prayer is expressed with greater depth and intensity than the one for the 'gift of Naam.' Now, Naam being the Benevolent Supporter and Director of the world, what can be the gift of Naam to the devotee, except that of an enlightened, loving and creative interest in the world and in its development. How can one claim to be a devotee of Naam and ask for its gift or link with it, and yet, decline to toe the line of Naam, namely, of nurturing and furthering the process of creativity and construction in the world rather than becoming an ascetic or a drop out. That is why the Gurus have strongly condemned all ascetic and escapist practices. They say, "One reaches not Truth by remaining motionless like trees and stones, nor by being sawn alive." [1. p. 952]. "In vain are yogic practices, without Naam life is a waste." [1. p. 905]. "All yogic austerities, rituals, trance, etc., are in vain; real yoga is in treating alike all beings. " [1. p. 730]. "O Yogi, you are sitting in a trance, but you discriminate and have a sense of duality. You beg from door to door, are you not ashamed of it ?" [1. p. 886]. "Jainic ascetism", or "even if the body is cut into bits, does not efface the dirt of ego." [1. p. 256].

What kind of life the Gurus recommended will be detailed while dealing with the subject of goal, but it would be

pertinent to quote here the Guru's dictum that "by despising the world one gets not to God." [1. p. 962].

In Buddhism, nirvana and samsara are opposite entities. [7.]. In fact, in all Indian traditions, except in the case of the saints of the Radical Bhakti movement, worldly life had normally to be given up in order to pursue the spiritual ideal. But according to Guru Granth Sahib, it is not Naam and samsara that are opposed, but Naam and haumain (egoism); [1. pp. 560,1092] it is not worldly activity, as such, that has to be given up, but it is only egoistic and selfish activities that have to be shed. [1. pp. 522, 1246, 661]. Otherwise, belief in a God of attributes, which involves expression in the world of man, becomes meaningless.

The best undestanding of the kind of interest in life the Gurus recommended for their disciples is gained from the lives they lived themselves. We shall revert to this point in detail while dealing with the issue of goal. Suffice it to say here that the Gurus, in harmony with the ethics of Naam, went in for full participation in life. For them it would have been incongruous on one hand to call life as real and on the other hand to fight shy of taking up the challenges of the socio-political life of their times.

All this was an ideological, deliberate and clear departure from the Indian religious tradition and the Gurus gave a firm lead on this new path. While eulogizing the role of the Sikh

Gurus in this regard, N. Ray laments the abject surrender to the vicious status quo on the part of the saints of the Bhakti movement. [4.].

6. Naam and Ethics

On one hand, Naam being (a) the Sustainer and Director of the universe, (b) opposed to egoism (haumain) and (c) treasure of all qualities, lays down the standard of its ethics and on the other, points out that the universe is the plane and place where the qualities of Naam have to be expressed, so as to counteract and remove the vices of egoism and the practice of a sense of duality. Egoism involves separatism, selfishness, and individualism leading to the vices of greed, anger, pride, passion, conflict, wars, etc. 'The removal of duality is the way of God,' [1. p. 126] Naam being the opposite of ego, the same has been indicated as the only remedy for egoism, pain and frustration. [1. p. 1205]. In the same context, the Gurus have mentioned two sets of people — one, the self-faced (manmukh) or egoistic, following the ethics of egoism and selfishness, and the other, the superman or God-faced (gurmukh), following the ethics of Naam in all phases of human activity. The ethics of Naam chooses its duties, virtues and value-system as consonant with the standard of Naam or a unitary view of life. Following are some of the verses in Guru Granth Sahib condemning egoism and

duality and instead recommending the virtues and spirit of Naam so as to avoid and eliminate the vices of egoism :

"In the grip of maya, we grab what belongs to others." [1. p. 715].

"Man gathers riches by making others miserable." [1. p. 889].

"Human passions, ego, duality lead us away from God." [1. p. 647].

"God does not come near a person hard of heart and with a sense of duality." [1. p. 751]. "Some people shun meat, but devour men." [1. p. 1289]. "With God, only the deeds that one does in the world are of any avail." [1. p. 1383]. "Goodness, righteousness, virtue and the giving up of vice are the ways to realize the essence of God." [1. p. 418]. 'God's riches belong to all, and it is the world that makes distinctions." [1. p. 1171].

Thus, the entire progress of man is from being an egoist to being a man of Naam by shedding egoism and accepting the ethics of Naam, i.e., from being self-centred to being God-centred.

7. Naam and Human Goal

It is in the field of human goals that the world-view of Naam and its logic make a basic departure from the traditional

Indian view on the subject. On this problem, the Gurus' views have not only been made clear and precise in their doctrine of Naam throughout Guru Granth Sahib, but these have also been emphasized and exemplified by their lives, which embody an unambiguous lesson on the issue. We shall, therefore, attempt to consider the subject from all the three angles, namely :

(a) the doctrine of Naam,

(b) other tenets and principles laid in Guru Granth Sahib,

(c) the lives that the Gurus led so as to lay down the ideal for others to follow.

(a) The Doctrine Of Naam :

Naam, the Ever-Creative Immanence of God, is engaged in directing the universe, which is real, to become a qualityful world. Every student of Guru Granth Sahib knows that the theme of a large number of prayers and hymns therein is a longing for the gift of Naam, or to be linked with Naam, e.g., "I am beholden to Him who enlightens me with Naam." "My Guru makes Naam permeate me." [1. p. 40]. "Let me not forget Naam, rest is all greed." [1. p. 1247]. "I beg from You the gift of Naam." [1. p. 289]. "He reaches the highest stage whom God benevolently yokes to His Naam." [1. p. 284]. "To ask for any boon other than Naam is to invite pain." [1. p. 958]. "To be imbued with Naam is the essence of true living." "Pray, link me to God." [1. p. 701].

Accordingly, the highest ideal under the Naam Marga is to be yoked or linked to Naam in order to take the world of man to a qualityful goal. In this context, the significance of a God of attributes has already been explained. Naam being the opposite of egoism, this progressive movement is towards an ideal in which selfishness and egoism disappear and qualities of Naam are practised. And to be linked to Naam only means being its instrument and sharing the responsibility of this creative and qualityful development in the world. One imbued with Naam not only takes part in the world without a sense of duality and selfishness, but also strives to create a beautiful world of harmony and quality. Egoism is the cause of all pain, suffering and conflict, which hinder progress towards the goal. As against it, the practice of Naam and its ethics, namely, the unitary view of life, is both the ideal and the sovereign remedy for all ills and evils (sarab rog kaa aukhad Naam), and the way to human development. "Destroy evil and you become a perfect man." [1. p. 404]. "Give up evil, do right and you realise the essence of God." [1. p. 418].

(b) Other Tenets And Principals In Guru Granth Sahib :

Let us see if the same ideal is prescribed under the other doctrines of Guru Granth Sahib. In answer to a specific question as to how to remove the wall of falsehood obstructing man's progress to become an ideal or a true man, the Guru gives a categoric reply : "By working according to the Will of God." [1. p. 1]. Again the same ideal

of deeds (not of words, rituals, ascetism or even of yogic discipline) is prescribed in the hymns of cosmography quoted earlier about the role of man on earth. It is pointed out that "all assessment is made in accordance with the deeds and doings of man ..... By His Grace only the righteous get the insignia of God's approval." [1. p. 7]. In Sikhism, God is the Creator of the Universe and invariably the prayer is to be of service to Him. "May I have millions of hands to serve Thee. Service is the way to cross the hurdles of life." [1. p. 781]. "Be ever alert in the service of God. Serve God every moment and relax not." [1. p. 647-8]. This in effect means to be of service in the universe, which is the authentic creative activity of God, who is directing it towards a goal and with a purpose. This service in the universe is really the selfless and qualityful service of all who have to be looked upon alike. [1. p. 77]. The Guru says, "Where there is egoism, God is not; where God is, there cannot be any egoism." [1. p. 1092].

In Sidh Gosht, Guru Nanak has very clearly specified his mission and goal and thrown full light on the issue as to how he would lead his followers across. He says, "With the help of other God-conscious persons, I shall help man to remove his alienation from Naam and God and assist him to cross the difficult hurdles in life." [1. p. 939]. Guru Nanak has thus clarified as to what he means by 'carrying out His Will' and executing God's mission of creating a society of God-centred men. The Guru says, "The God-man achieves the goal and makes all others do so." [1. p. 125]. That is exactly

the reason why the Gurus have likened themselves to a 'servant of God,' 'a soldier in God's Legion,' or 'a wrestler in the cause of God.' The world being the authentic creation of God, supported by His immanence, the service of God means the service of His creation, namely, the world, this life and man. It is in this light that the Guru's hymns in Sidh Gosht and elsewhere have to be understood.

Here we may lay stress on two very important and relevant points : (i) The Gurus have repeatedly indicated a continuing process of development, evolution and progress in the empirical world, and (ii) they clearly point out that further progress from animal-men or egoistic men to supermen or God-centred men is not only possible, but is also aimed at. In the hymns of cosmography, already quoted, an ascending order of creation, form, or evolution is indicated. The Gurus have stated that individuation was created by God and 'slowly there has been growth from small organisms, insects, etc., to animals, and finally to the present animal-man, with his subtle sense of perception, discrimination, reason, introspection.' [1. pp. 946, 466]. "For several births (you) were a mere worm, for several births an insect, for several births a fish, animal, ... after ages have you the glory of being man." [1. p. 176]. " ..... after passing through myriads of species, one is blest with the human form." [1. p. 631]. "God created you out of a drop of water and breathed life in you. He endowed you with the light of reason, discrimination and wisdom ..... From a sinner He made you virtuous and the lord of all beings. Now it is up to

you to fulfil or not to fulfil your destiny." [1. p. 913]. Further progress of man or animal-man, as stated in the hymn of Dharam khand, depends entirely on the deeds of the individuals. Till man came on the scene, it was not possible for life to outgrow its animal existence and alienation from God. So far, like other animals, man too has been living an animal existence. But, the Guru emphasizes the opportunity available to man to become a superman, the highest ideal in the world of creation, and thereby be the humble but active agent of the Creative God, as indicated in the hymns of Sidh Gosht quoted above. "Man with his egocentric individuality is basically an animal, with all animal limitations" [1. p. 267] and alienation from Naam or God. But, he has the invaluable capacity to come into his own by breaking this alienation and establishing a link with Naam.

The Guru again and again addresses man to give up his egocentric activity and instead to rise to his full stature and avail himself of this one opportunity. "After ages, this invaluable opportunity of human birth is obtained, but one loses it for nothing; one loses a ruby in exchange for a piece of broken glass." [1. p. 1203]. "Among eighty-four lakhs of species, man is assigned the supreme position, whosoever misses the opportunity, suffers the pain of transmigration." [1. p. 1075]. "Human birth is the epitome of fruitful effort, but man loses it for a trifle." [1. p. 1179]. "Human birth is precious." [1. p. 751]. "You have obtained the privilege of human body, now is your one opportunity to meet God." [1. p. 12]. This is how we understand Guru Nanak's statements

that his mission is, with the help of other God-conscious persons, to assist man to grow into superman, so as to cross egoistic obstacles in the sea of life, and thereby to help the process of evolution and creativity to supermanship, flowering into a beautiful world. Hence, the ideal is not only to be a superman oneself, but with the help of other supermen to convert everybody into supermen. [1.p.295]. And this physico-spiritual ideal, laid down in Guru Granth Sahib, can be reached only in this world by removing human alienation caused by ego (haumen) which is opposed to Naam, and which can be removed only by creative and altruistic living.

Already we have looked at this issue from another angle and concluded that Naam is conducting a qualityful movement expressible and aimed at fructifying in the world of man. In the background of Indian religions, this is the way to emphasize the importance of creative living in the world, as also of what one may call, this-worldly interest of God. To say that God has moral qualities does not mean an anthropomorphic description of God, but it is a metaphoric way of expressing the essentiality of virtuous conduct which alone secures progress as against the egoistic and individualistic activity of the selfcentred man (manmukh), who generates forces of separatism, conflict, war and chaos. That is why the Guru also describes the God-centred man (gurmukh), the ideal in Sikhism, as having qualities of spontaneous beneficence, love, help to the poor, etc., essentially the same qualities as of God. In short, in the case

of God-centred man, his love for God is in fact transformed into God's love for man.

It needs to be clarified here whether the ideal in Sikhism is linkage with God or merger in God. According to the Gurus, man, because of his individualism and selfishness, stands alienated from God's immanence. Instead of serving God of attributes, man, in his ignorance and myopic vision, starts serving his own self and fails to rise to his full height of being a conscious and humble instrument of God's creative functioning in the world. In His Transcendence, God's Being is all by Himself in a Self-absorbed state, without sign of any visible form, devotion, love or creative activity. In that state, God's Will, Naam or attributes are not expressed, since these can work only in the created world.

Second is the state when God's Naam and Will are expressed and creative functioning in the universe goes on. To talk of merger in God in this state involves virtually a reversion to the first state of God being Self-absorbed. This is, therefore, a contradiction in terms, because while God is engaged in His Creative Activity, there can be no question of the cessation of this dynamic activity or merger of man in the Self-absorbed state. Besides, such an opposite process would be evidently counter to the expressed creative Will of God. True, there are some hymns in Guru Granth Sahib where merger with God appears to be indicated, but this merger or joining means only a link, as quoted earlier, with the Creative Immanence of God, because merger involves

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loss of identity and can be possible only in a pantheistic creed and not in a theistic creed like Sikhism.

Below are quoted a few of the hymns which clarify the issue :

(i) "His body and mind are imbued entirely with the hue of Naam and he lives always in the company of God; as one stream of water intermingles with another, in the same manner his light merges in the light of God." [1. p. 278].

(ii) "The gurmukh is all admiration for the attributes of God; and he remains merged in God." [1. p. 942].

(iii) "Brahmgyaani looks solely to God for all support." "God lives by the side of Brahmgyaani." "Brahmgyaani is himself God." [1. p. 273].

(iv) "He devotes himself to God with his whole being and remains merged in his God." [1. p. 286].

All these and similar other hymns are significant, because the idea of the superman's identity being different from that of God appears in the same hymn as containing, side by side, the idea of his apparent merger in God. Evidently, the Gurus would not give two contradictory concepts in the same breath. Therefore, the seeming symbols of merger only signify a link between the superman (gurmukh) and Naam, especially as in all these and other such hymns, the superman has been indicated as a functioning and separate identity.

We further amplify to show that the interpretation stated above is the only one that can be accepted :

(i) The Gurus do not lay two kinds of ideals for their disciples, i.e., one of link with the Creative Naam or His Will and expressible only in the created world, and the other of one's merger in the Self-absorbed state of God, even while the created world exists and is being dynamically worked by His Immanence. Nowhere in Sikhism is there the least evidence or suggestion of two alternative ideals or duality of goals. Such a thing is contrary to the very fundamentals of Sikhism as expressed profusely in Guru Granth Sahib and in the entire Sikh tradition, which is not only anti-ascetic and anti-withdrawal from life, but stands for active participation in the world. Merger in the anonymity of Brahman may be the ideal in other Indian systems or salvation religions, where the world is either an illusion or of a lower category, or where participation in samsara is anti-spiritual, but it cannot be so where God is the Creator of this beautiful world, which is the only field of His Will and Creative Activity. The goal is not heaven or salvation but love of Naam : "Heaven cannot equal God's Naam. The God-faced has no desire for salvation." "I seek not power, nor salvation; pray, give me the love of God." [1. pp. 1078, 534].

(ii) In Dharam khand, the Guru has clearly laid down that for every one on this earth, the only ideal is of virtuous activity and deeds, which alone meet God's approval. The same

direction is given in the Guru's dictum : 'Higher than truth is truthful conduct or living.'

(iii) In the Hymn of Cosomography, as discussed earlier, the superman is limited only to the Region of Creativity. He is not merged in His Immanence, much less in His Transcendence, where the question of the separate identity of the devotee does not arise. Any such suggested merger would even be contrary to the clear denial of incarnation of God (avatarhood) in Sikh theology. For, a corollary of man's merger in God would be God's incarnation as man.

(iv) Merger of the superman with God, without being His creative instrument, would inevitably involve the re-absorption of the Immanence or Will of God. This would virtually be a request for winding up all God's creative activity. Such an ideal might be logical in religious systems where human existence is not considered real and authentic, or is a bondage, or in dualistic creeds where the separation of the spiritual element from the material element (prakriti) is sought. That is why in such systems, self-immolating asceticism and calculated other worldliness or austerities have a logical and recognised spiritual sanction, but not so in Sikhism, where all such practices have not only been considered to be useless and superfluous, but are deemed positively harmful and un-spiritual, especially when the Guru's God is Creative and Attributive, and wants His supermen to be the instruments of His Will and of His Progressive Creativity. This makes one

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point clear. The Guru's language being symbolic, link, merger, or joining can never mean fusion, or loss of human identity of the superman, and, thus, his ceasing to be a creative instrument of God's Will, plan and purpose in the created world. The ideal of simple merger or nirvana (not Bodhisattvic) would not be the service of God or Naam or action according to His Will, but would rather be an anti-creative annihilation or spiritual suicide almost egoistic in its content.

(v) The ideal of merger in God would be quite foreign to a monotheistic creed like Sikhism, which in all its aspects, is anti-pantheistic and casts on the individual the responsibility of taking up God-centred activity instead of self-centred indulgence. Harmony with the Will of God does not mean absorption into it but free co-operation with it. 'Our wills are ours to make them Thine.' In other words, 'identification with the Divine Will on man's part really signifies an act of faith and freedom by which he makes the Divine End, his own end; it is not the recognition of the actual identity of his will with God's Will,' writes Galloway. [3.].

We conclude that the superman, towards whom the evolutionary progress is directed, becomes the instrument of, or linked to Naam. This is the meaning of the ideal of one's being linked with Naam or doing the Will of God or being given the boon of Naam. The role of the God-faced is not only to be ever-creative and altruistic himself, but also

to make the entire social fabric creative and virtuous. In Indian religious life, it involves a radical shift from personal piety and salvation to service of man in general, whose uplift becomes the first and the highest love and priority in spiritual endeavour. Everyone is to be raised to the level of the superman and treated as equal. This we have seen is the thesis of Guru Granth Sahib. Since all these ideals can be pursued by the superman only in the spacio-temporal world, it is obvious that any supposed ideal of merger, as in some other religions, is both foreign and contrary to the thesis of Naam. Just as in the case of the art of swimming, no training or test of it is possible outside the pool, similarly, whether a person is self-centred or God-centred, qualityful or otherwise, can be tested and authenticated only in this world of ours, and that also from one's deeds and activities during his participation. The aim is to be the instrument of God and to fulfil the object of evolving supermen and making this world into a beautiful and qualityful place of supermen, i.e., to create God's kingdom on earth.

(c) The Lives That The Gurus Led So As To Lay Down The Ideal For Others To Follow :

Having come to the conclusion that according to the doctrine of Naam, as laid down in Guru Granth Sahib, complete participation in life is the ideal, we may see what kind of life the Gurus lived. The lives of the ten Gurus are the best pointer to the goal of human life set in Guru Granth Sahib, since these constitute the clearest interpretation of

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their teachings. In the Guru Granth Sahib, all kinds of social and political qualities have been attributed to God and the Superman. Accordingly, it was the demand of the doctrine of Naam that the Gurus take full share in the life of their times. And we see that this is, as it should have been.

Apart from the eternal problems of man, with which the Gurus dealt in detail, students of history know that in the Gurus' times there were two malignant growths — the caste and the tyrannical political system. The Gurus never bypassed them as being too mundane to concern them. Regarding both these matters, the Gurus' role has been revolutionary. In their hymns, they have forcefully condemned these institutions : "The pride of caste leads to multifarious evils." [1. p. 1128]. "Distinction of high and low caste and colour, hell and heaven introduced by the Vedas are misleading." [1. p. 1243]. "Kings are like tigers and courtiers like dogs, and they prey upon peaceful citizens. The Kings' employees tear up innocent persons, and the dogs lick up the blood that is shed." [1. p. 1288]. "The Mughals are made the instrument of death. The people have suffered intensely, O God, art Thou not moved? ..... If the strong mauls the strong, I grieve not. If the lion attacks the sheep, the master of the flock must answer." [1. p. 360]. Their protest against these evils did not rest at that. In the social institutions which the Gurus organised, caste had no place. Four of the five Beloved Ones (panj piaraas) of the Guru, who were to lead the entire community of the Sikhs were from the Sudras. After the political execution of the

Fifth Guru, the Sixth Guru started regular military training and preparations in order to fight the challenges of the oppressive political system. The execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur intensified the socio-political struggle against Mughal misrule. Two of the sons of Guru Gobind Singh sacrificed their lives in war, while the remaining two were bricked alive. The Tenth Guru also laid down his own life in this struggle. It is not our object here to go into historical details or to assess the political impact of the Sikh movement. We need only to stress that as the result of their own thesis laid down in Guru Granth Sahib, the Gurus felt a spontaneous spiritual compulsion to organise and raise a revolt against the oppressive socio-political system.Obviously, the lives of the Gurus reinforce the conclusion we have already reached, namely, that Guru Granth Sahib stands for complete participation in all creative and constructive aspects of life.

8. Way to Naam

Now, we come to the last question as to how to establish link with Naam, how to become God-centred from a self-centred person, and what method of training to adopt on this path. Just as the attributive God must work in the world, the training and transformation must also be in the world itself, and not outside it. In Guru Granth Sahib the following five modes of training have been referred to :

(a) remembering God (Naam);

(b) keeping good company;

(c) developing a sense of discrimination;

(d) doing virtuous activities in the sense explained already;

(e) avoiding vices.

It is not our object here to elaborate on these except (i) to clarify an ambiguity which, we feel, exists about remembering Naam and (ii) to give a few statements of the Gurus on each of these modes.

(a) Remembering God (Naam) : There is considerable misunderstanding as to what constitutes the remembering of Naam. True, in Guru Granth Sahib there is laid great stress on remembering Naam (Naam Japanaa) and praise of God (sift saalaah). Accordingly, it has been said by some that this remembering, or what Trumpp calls "muttering", is by itself enough for one to link oneself with God. This remembrance is sometimes also understood to mean yogic practices for the achievement of the so-called bliss as an end in itself. We are not only unaware of any hymns in Guru Granth Sahib recommending such yogic practices or any tradition in this regard, but there are clear hymns against the use of such practices as means to spiritual achievement or as ends in themselves. In the very first hymn of Japuji, mere one-point meditation is considered pointless, the way to be a sachiara is to work according to His Will. True, there

are numerous verses in Guru Granth Sahib eulogizing Naam and Its remembrance. But there are also innumerable verses denying the utility of any mechanical means or mere repetition of words or hymns, e.g., "Every one repeats God's Name, but by such repetition one gets not to God." [1. p. 491]. "With guile in heart, he practises guile, but mutters God's Name. He is pounding husk and is in darkness and pain." [1. p. 1199]. "One mutters God's Name, but does evil daily in this way the heart is not purified." [1. p. 732]. The important thing is the motivation behind praise and remembrance. Flattery, sycophancy and hypocritical utterances cannot be considered praise, because the motive of such utterances is self-interest. Real praise involves admiration, love and devotion accompanied by an honest desire to follow as an ideal or imbibe the qualities of the one who is praised, God in this case. Such praise is a pining for what we are not, with a humble desire to move in the direction of the ideal. Praise, thus, is a spontaneous acknowledgement of the Glory of God and the desire to please Him, not by mere words but by qualityful deeds. Similarly, remembrance or repetitive utterances can be mechanical, magical, or ritualistic in nature. As against it, remembering can be a way to keep in mind one's basic ideals so that the frail human psyche does not falter or deviate from one's chosen direction and ideals. That is why, in the hymns of Guru Granth Sahib, the reference is not at all to any mechanical repetition but to keep God in mind. Hence, the words used for the purpose are, Naam 'being or

living in one's consciousness' (man vasai, or kare nivaas), 'enlightening one's being' (kare pargaas), 'imbued'(ratte), etc. This remembrance is like keeping the fear of God in one's mind while embarking on any activity or making any decision. It is not an end in itself and seeks no magical or compulsive effects, but it is a way of reminding oneself to take heart and courage to do the right thing. Just as in the case of 'doing the Will of God' and 'being yoked to Naam', 'remembering' is also inalienably linked with the subsequent decision to be made and activity to be undertaken. 'By dwelling on the Word, mind flows to serve others.' In short, the praise and remembrance of Naam, or keeping 'Naam in heart' is just the means to recall the lesson and the ideal suggested by Attributive Naam. It is an humble attempt to seek the Grace and Light of the Guiding Star of Naam, to show to the weak and wavering psyche the path one has to tread and the direction in which one has to move in life. The conclusion is the same, namely, that all deeds and activities have to be in life, which is the sole test of the earlier training, remembrance and preparation.

(b) Company Of God-faced Men : The Guru writes : "Just as castor plant imbibes the scent of the adjacent sandal wood, similarly, even the fallen are emancipated by the company of true ones." [1. p. 861]. "In good company, we become true and develop love for Naam." [1. p. 58]. In good company, one becomes good." [1. p. 314].

(c) Use Of Reason And Sense Of Discrimination: In the Gurus' system, use of human rationality and sense of discrimination have a distinct and important place. Man's faculty of reason is without doubt an asset which other animals do not possess. Sikh theology being non-deterministic, man has a distinct moral freedom and responsibility in the choice of his actions and thereby to bring about his transformation. The Guru writes, "By use of discrimination or intellect one serves God. By discrimination one is honoured. By discrimination and study one understands things. It is the sense of discrimination that makes one charitable. This is the right way, rest is all wrong." [1. p. 1245]. "Man is blessed with the light of reason and discrimination." [1. p. 913]. "One, in fear of God and discriminating between good and bad, appears sweet to God." [1. p. 768]. "We know right from wrong and yet fall into the well with torch in hand." [1. p. 1376].

(d) Ethical And Creative Activities: We have concluded already that only moral deeds in all fields of human activity are acceptable to God. God's interest in this development of man can be gauged from the fact that "He takes cognizance of and rewards even an iota of good deed," [1. p. 784] it being "His innermost nature to help the erring." [1. p. 828]. A few of the Guru's hymns on the issue are given below : "Love, contentment, truth, humility and other virtues enable the seed of Naam (vision of basic unity and reality) to sprout." [1. p. 955].

(e) Avoiding Vices : Side by side with the above positive step it is equally important to avoid vices, "With self-control and discipline, we forsake vice and see the miracle of man becoming God." [1. pp. 343-4]. "Drive out lust and anger, be the servant of all, and see the Lord in all hearts." [1. p. 866]. Control your evil propensities and you become a perfect man." [1. p. 404]. "Good, righteousness, virtue and giving up of vice are the way to realize the essence of God." [1. p. 418]. "Control cravings, and the light of wisdom will come; then fashion this wisdom into deeds." [1. p. 878].

We need hardly amplify the point except to say that the entire approach and the method of training have to be interconnected and simultaneous. The remembrance of God, good company and use of human rationality have to be the means to help man to undertake and do right kind of action and deeds, involving productive work, sharing of profits, and looking upon and treating all alike. "The man incapable of earning a living gets his ears split (for wearing yogic-earrings), or one becomes a mendicant. He calls himself guru or saint, but begs for food from door to door. Never look up to such a person or touch his feet. He alone knows the way who earns his living by hard work and shares his income with others," [1. p. 1245] i.e., the training of man has to be in life and for life. "My whole being, body and consciousness are imbued with Naam. True living is living God in life." [1. p. 684]. In the Guru's system, the entire development has to be integrated, good actions leading to change in emotions and attitudes, and change in motives

and approach resulting in good reactions and deeds. According to the Guru, "without good deeds no worship is possible." [1. p. 4].

Here is an important word of caution. We are not at all denying the basic sanctity of the mystic approach and experience, or that the ultimate link with Naam involving the highest spiritual or suprasensory experience is an act of God's Grace. All we suggest is that according to the Sikh Gurus, the seeker's way to invite God's Grace is through virtuous and non-egoistic deeds in life, and that after the mystic experience, the compulsion for such deeds is even greater than before, since one is the creative instrument of the Attributive Naam, dynamically directing and sustaining the world.

9. Conclusion

We recapitulate briefly our conclusions:

(i) The Transcendent God expressed Himself in Naam that created the world.

(ii) Naam is the Creative and Dynamic Immanence of God, supporting and directing the becoming universe towards (a) a qualityful goal and (b) the emergence of a society of supermen.

(iii) The Gurus' system is monotheistic, since God is both Transcendent and Immanent, and the world is His creation.

(iv) The world is proclaimed as authentic and the sole sphere of Naam's deed, interest and activity. It is not illusory or of a lower category of reality.

(v) Accordingly, all human actions have a reality and validity, and are immoral or moral, destructive or constructive, self-centred or God-centred, to the extent they contribute or not to the ethics of Naam or a unitary view of life.

(vi) The superman is both the knower and the executor of God's Will. After enlightenment, his duties and responsibilities, as the agent of Naam, increase and become more purposeful. He cannot be a silent spectator of this world, or a mere enjoyer of bliss; his bliss lies in being yoked to God's purpose, giving meaning to life, and hope and optimism to man, i.e., in Sikhism, the test, expression and goal of all mystic and spiritual endeavour is life and life alone.

(vii) The way to establish link with Naam is through virtuous participation and deeds in all aspects of life, which is the sole arena and test of spiritual and mystic activity both for men and supermen. It is not possible to have link with God by ritualistic, ascetic or escapist practices or even so-called salvation or merger.

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The doctrine of Naam gives a clear clue to the understanding of Sikh theology and Sikh history. It also explains vividly the ten Gurus' attack on the socio-political institutions of their times, their martyrdoms and military preparations and struggle with a view to creating new socio-political organisations and institutions, and how all these were the logical consequence of a single spiritual thesis and the continuous unfolding of a planned process, uninfluenced by local, social or political circumstances or the exigencies or accidents of history.

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